

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A continuous casting method for continuously manufacturing an aluminum or aluminum alloy metal cast member, comprising:
driving a casting wheel, with a groove formed on an external peripheral surface thereof and an endless belt put on the casting wheel so as to close the groove, in a direction of casting; and

causing the casting wheel and the endless belt to be differentiated in temperature therebetween at a portion of the endless belt where molten metal starts to come into contact with the endless belt, said causing including:

heating the endless belt at a position before where the molten metal starts to come in contact with the endless belt such that said portion of the endless belt where molten metal starts to come into contact with the endless belt is heated to a temperature of ((melting point or liquidus-line temperature of the aluminum or aluminum alloy metal) x 0.35) or above, wherein said heating is performed by a heating device that is not configured to heat the molten metal; and
cooling the casting wheel.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The continuous casting method as recited in claim 1, wherein a temperature of the endless belt at said portion of the endless belt where molten metal starts to come in contact with the endless belt is set to a temperature of ((melting point or liquidus temperature of the metal) x 0.5) or above.

Claims 4-8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Previously Presented/Withdrawn): An aluminum or aluminum alloy cast member continuously cast by the method as recited in claim 1, wherein the aluminum or aluminum alloy cast member comprises a final solidification portion having relatively larger crystallized substances and located within a depth from a surface of the cast member, the depth being $((\text{thickness of the cast member}) \times 0.2)$ or less.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): The cast member as recited in claim 9, wherein a surface layer portion is removed from the cast member.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented/Withdrawn): A metal worked article obtained by performing plastic working to the cast member as recited in claim 9.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): A continuous casting apparatus, comprising:

- a casting wheel with a groove formed on an external peripheral surface thereof, and an endless belt put on the casting wheel so as to close the groove, the casting wheel and the endless belt being configured to be driven in a direction of casting;
- a heating device disposed ahead of a position where the endless belt starts to come into contact with aluminum or aluminum alloy molten metal, the heating device being configured to heat a portion of the endless belt, where the molten alloy starts to come into contact with the endless belt, to a temperature of $((\text{melting point or liquidus-line temperature of the aluminum or aluminum alloy metal}) \times 0.35)$ or above, wherein the heating device is not configured to heat the molten metal; and
- a cooling device which is configured to cool the casting wheel.

Claim 13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The continuous casting method as recited in claim 1, wherein said heating the endless belt comprises using a burner to direct heat on to a surface of the endless belt not facing the molten metal.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The continuous casting method according to claim 14, wherein said using a burner comprises providing said burner immediately before a position where the endless belt comes in contact with the casting wheel.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented/Withdrawn): The aluminum cast member as recited in claim 10, further comprising a “V” shaped or “U” shaped removal region resulting from removal of the final solidification portion.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The continuous casting apparatus of claim 12, wherein the heating device comprises a burner configured to direct heat on to a surface of the endless belt not facing the molten metal.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The continuous casting apparatus of claim 17, wherein the burner is provided immediately before a position where the endless belt comes in contact with the casting wheel.

Claim 19 (New): The continuous casting apparatus of Claim 12, wherein the heating device is configured to heat the endless belt such that the aluminum or aluminum alloy cast

member comprises a final solidification portion having relatively larger crystallized substances and located within a depth from a surface of the cast member, the depth being $((\text{thickness of the cast member}) \times 0.2)$ or less.

Claim 20 (New): The continuous casting apparatus of Claim 12, wherein the heating device is configured to heat said portion of the endless belt to a temperature of $((\text{melting point or liquidus-line temperature of the aluminum or aluminum alloy metal}) \times 0.5)$ or above.

Claim 21 (New): The continuous casting apparatus of Claim 20, wherein the heating device is configured to heat said portion of the endless belt to a temperature of $((\text{melting point or liquidus-line temperature of the aluminum or aluminum alloy metal}) \times 0.6)$ or above.

Claim 22 (New): The continuous casting apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said heating device is configured to heat the endless belt such that said portion is heated to 230°C or more.

Claim 23 (New): The continuous casting apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said heating device is configured to heat the endless belt such that said portion is heated to 330°C or more.

Claim 24 (New): The continuous casting apparatus of Claim 12, wherein said heating device is configured to heat the endless belt such that said portion is heated to 400°C or more.

Claim 25 (New): The continuous casting method of Claim 1, wherein said heating comprises heating the endless belt such that the aluminum or aluminum alloy cast member

comprises a final solidification portion having relatively larger crystallized substances and located within a depth from a surface of the cast member, the depth being ((thickness of the cast member) x 0.2) or less.

Claim 26 (New): The continuous casting method of Claim 3, wherein said heating the endless belt comprises heating the endless belt such that said portion is heated to a temperature of ((melting point or liquidus-line temperature of the aluminum or aluminum alloy metal) x 0.6) or above.

Claim 27 (New): The continuous casting method of Claim 1, wherein said heating the endless belt comprises heating the endless belt to a temperature of 230°C or more.

Claim 28 (New) The continuous casting method of Claim 1, wherein said heating the endless belt comprises heating the endless belt to a temperature of 330°C or more.

Claim 29 (New): The continuous casting method of Claim 1, wherein said heating the endless belt comprises heating the endless belt to a temperature of 400°C or more.